**First Unitarian Church of Providence**

Prudential Committee Meeting Notes

April 14, 2021

**ATTENDING:**

**Prudential Committee**

Michael Cappelli, President

Cheryl Bartholomew, Past-President

Odile Mattiauda, President-elect

Roberta Groch, Treasurer

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk

Edie Warren, Personnel Liaison

Beth Armstrong, Strategic Planning

Louise Sloan, Community Life Liaison

Greg Kniseley, Social Justice Liaison

Elizabeth Allsworth, Spiritual Development Liaison

Stewardship Liaison – vacant

Assistant Treasurer - vacant

Ex-officio - Liz Lerner Maclay, Minister

**Church Staff Attending**

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education

Nancy Forsstrom, Church Administrator

**Guests**

Amy Grant, Ted Martin, Steve McCloy, Brian Paradis, Max Pounder

**Meeting was held remotely via zoom due to COVID-19 Emergency.**

**6:45 PM - Gathering**

**7:00 PM Opening Words – Michael -** Words from Rev. John Saxon

**Chalice Lighting & Covenant Reading**

**Call to Order – 7:02 PM**

**March 10 Minutes** - Motion to accept minutes of March meeting as amended. Rev. Liz is ex- officio member of PruComm. ( Michael / Cheryl). Approved Unanimously

**Special Meeting Minutes April 7 –** Motion to accept Minutes of Special Meeting, April 7 as presented – (Michael / Edie). Passed Unanimously.

**April Treasurer’s Report –** **See report** – With 75% of year passed, our expenses are at 54%; pledges at 82%; other income categories are below. Overall, we are still where we need to be, at 76% of budgeted income. PPE Loan – The bank has reviewed everything and passed along to Small Business Association. Review and approval could take up to 90 days or more. We have every expectation that the loan will be forgiven. We are still running a surplus, but there may not be a surplus by end of fiscal year.

Analysis of this year’s pledge fulfillment to date– We have made improvement since February. Compared to last March, figures are very similar.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Commitment Drive** – Thanks to Nancy, Cheryl, Odile, Jenn, Walter, Bill and Bev Koteff and whole team. We have $355,000 in pledges for 2021/2022 FY to date. This has been our first virtual drive. Everyone received a mailer. Commitment Drive was promoted from the pulpit, videos from members were highlighted during service and in E-Newsletter. Personalized emails were sent to those who did not pledge in first week or two. Jenn is reaching out to new members with personalized calls. Followed by notecard reminders and phone calls. We have been averaging $71,000 per week. 210 pledges to date. About half have raised their pledge. Some who did not pledge last year have now pledged. If folks who pledged last year do the same, we will be at around $500,000. Will be doing another round of videos.

**Food storage proposal (Ted, Max) –** We have beendoing food pantry in new way due to pandemic, boxing food up and distributing boxes to cars. We continue to get more efficient with this process. However, we are in need storage space. Prior to pandemic we had been storing food in sanctuary basement – shuttling food to Parish House on Sunday AM. Since pandemic, we have been putting food in Haynes Room on floor. We should not be storing food on the floor according to RI Food Bank. Worked with Max and Brian on proposal for shelving to store the food. 144 boxes of food (1 cubic foot per box). Proposing shelving on north wall of Haynes room. This would allow for 12 - 15 feet of shelving two feet deep, six feet high. We could hang cubicle curtains for aesthetic purposes for use of the room during the rest of the week. Food pantry budget would pay for half. Requesting PruComm to authorize spending for remaining half. Request is for immediate need (this fiscal year)

Nancy pointed out that there are larger space issues, but the Haynes room is the only place to store food for the food pantry.

**Motion: (Michael/ Elizabeth): That the PruComm both endorse the use of the Haynes room as described by Max Pounder for the storage of food supplies and authorizes up to $2000 to be contributed by the church contingent on the church’s ability to find adequate funds from unspent budget allocations.** Motion passed unanimously.

**REPORTS**:

* **Minister (Liz) –** In addition to the usual activities,, Liz has Supported efforts to get vaccination our to BIPOC populations in RI. There has been a lack of access to vaccines in these marginalized communities – difficulty to get vaccine appointments since computer access and technological sophistication is required. Many spots were being taken by folks from other communities. Therefore last weekend there were two special vaccination efforts otherwise unannounced targeting BIPOC communities a the Dunk and a storefront in Woonsocket. Appointments are being made with / by community leaders. Last weekend 2800 people were vaccinated, most BIPOC. Tufts, Lifespan and Neighborhood are helping with transportation and promotion for upcoming weekend.
* **DRE (Cathy ) –** April soulful home packets for parents went out. Spiritual Pathways met many times this month, planning for next church year. Delivered pansy plants to children and families. Twelfth session of Widening the Circle of Concern. Sexuality education for parents. Advisers working with Senior high for service in May. Met with 300th committee and connecting youth with Bethel AME project. Working with Sabbatical committee. Planning with UUA on multi-platform ministry. Listening session with parents planned for May.
* **7:31PM - Church Administrator (Nancy) –** Workign on building use, commitment drive. We now have our 501c3. Tech team is working getting discounted tech accounts. New equipment (computers, monitors, etc.) has been ordered. 501c3 saved $600. Bell and clock repair progress - Verdin folks took measurements for bell crib. Steeple jack took off the clock hands.
* **Liaison updates**
  + **Strategic Planning** – **(Beth) –** Mission statement. Met with Liz and Bev Koteff to discuss rollout of mission statement. PruComm liaisons are being asked to set up appointments for presentations by mission statement task force in May after “reveal” on May 9. Beth will get in touch with Jim Corbin (graphic design) to design visual applications of mission statement. Elizabeth and Cathy will parallel in youth service and also develop mission statement for youth. Cathy and Spiritual Pathways Committee will also encourage teachers to attend congregational conversations. Also inviting conversation with Senior High Youth Group. Plan moving forward will be to use the mission statement to teach youth and families. Bev and Bill Koteff will design webpage devoted to mission statement and commentary. There will be 2 teasers in the First U Times before the May 9 “ reveal.” May 9 reveal during worship service. Five members of task force along with Liz will participate in service. Beth and Liz working on service. Music is settled. Coffee hour on May 9 will be devoted to Mission Statement discussion. Webpage will go live after May 9. Tuesday May 11, email will go out to whole congregation with commentary. Main point will be that the mission statement was based on congregational discussions for the last several years. Task Force will meet via zoom with Committees who have scheduled a meeting with them after May 9. Nancy is helping with scheduling. Links to mission statement will be included in all announcement of annual meeting where vote will take place to adopt mission statement up or down. Perhaps “Part 2” to happen in Fall. How is Mission statement driving decisions of our work – PruComm should frequently communicate how our work is based on Mission Statement. Suggestion that there be opportunities for people who cannot attend zoom meetings for whatever reason to give feedback directly to task force members.
  + **Congregational Life** – **(Louise) –** Not addressed in interest of time
  + **Social Justice (Greg)**  – See Rainbow Flag Task Force Discussion
  + **Spritual Development (Elizabeth) –** Elizabeth and family are moving to Montana. Her contribution has been very much appreciated. She will be greatly missed after they move this summer!!
  + **Stewardship** – See Commitment Drive Discussion
  + **Human Resources** – **(Edie)–** No update in interest of time

**DISCUSSION:**

**Rainbow welcome symbol (Greg) –** (See proposal document) Steve McCloy requested that PruComm move on a request from 2014 that we display symbol of welcoming for LGBTQ community. Greg assembled Task Force. The Task Force agreed that they wanted to install both rainbow flag and BLM symbols inside and outside meeting house. The Task Force proposed six different options. Short term – low cost phase would install symbols inside and outside. Chevron rainbow flag banner and BLM banner vertically on walls behind pulpit. Painting rainbow colors on stair risers at front entrance. Another proposal would be to hang similar banners at entrance between columns on Benefit Street. Also small yard signs. Proposed to do these quickly before Pride Week and Flag day. Discussion ensued that there was a feeling that vertical flags in front near pulpit could be distracting during contemplative moments and might give impression that these were the ONLY issues we care about as a community. Alternative was suggested that we place flags on poles near American and State flags at back of Sanctuary.

More long term solution would be to install a flagpole to hang American, rainbow and BLM flags. This idea was strongly supported. Signage that can have flexible messaging. Installing symbols is only one step. We need to engage in Welcoming Congregation Renewal process. Steve McCloy and Patrick Cumberland are willing to lead this initiative.

Need to speak with Historic District Commission regarding outside proposals and any restrictions on their placement on a historic building and grounds.

**Motion: That the PruComm accept recommendation of the Rainbow Flag Task Force; that we will address the exterior request for flagpole and signage and banner with contingency that we can obtain appropriate approvals; additionally, that we will approve and obtain funding to paint risers on front entrance steps in rainbow colors and the hanging of flags adjacent to the US flag and Statw flag in the Sanctuary; in addition that we approve the placement of the “What we believe in” UU yard signs to be placed on our front lawn. The PruComm further endorses the Welcoming Congregational Renewal effort. (Michael / Greg).** Motion passed unanimously.

**Executive session – Motion to enter executive session** (Cheryl / Elizabeth) **9:55PM - 10:35PM**

**Closing Words** – Michael - Words from Kimberly Quinn Johnson

**10:40PM Adjourn (Beth / Michael )**

Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk